

ANT4354 - Anthropology of Modern Africa

Syllabus

Instructor: Abdoulaye Kane

Grinter Hall 439

Tel: 352 392 6788

E-mail: akane@ufl.edu

Office hours: Wednesday, 10am to 12pm.

ANG5354/ANT4354/AFS4935/ “Anthropology of Modern Africa”

Meeting: Thursday: Periods 8-10 (3:00 to 6:00pm)

Room: TUR 2305

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar examines the recent essays and ethnographies written by Anthropologist on what has been presented as an alternative African modernity. Africa has been early on - in the historical trajectory of Anthropology as a discipline - the perfect object of analysis for western scholars interested in understanding human evolution and progress. Africa was not just presented by early anthropologists as a different space or place; it was more fundamentally replaced in a different time in an evolutionary timeline. What the African were experiencing was viewed as a thing of the past in the modern Western historical trajectory. To put it bluntly the present of Africa was seen and presented as being the past of Western societies. The logical conclusion drawn by modernizing theorists was that Africans and the Third World societies in general could follow in the steps of the Western world to achieve the same level of material, technological, and scientific advancement. But with the obvious failure of modernization policies it has been quite clear that the differences between the West and the rest could not be reduce to their economic and material dimensions. Anthropologists - whose discipline was first to label African societies as primitive – were first to think of African alternative modernity. Africa and Africans were modern in their own terms and should not be evaluated with a Western centered concept of modernity.

The discipline of Anthropology has been also the first one to engage in critical evaluation of western scholarship on Africa. Most of the postcolonial ethnographies have been invested in proving and defending what Johannes Fabian called the co-evalness of African societies vis-à-vis

the western societies. The attitude is to claim modernity for African societies without systematically taking the West as the model of reference. This seminar will, through the use of essays, ethnographies, journal articles, and films, focus on the major debates and discussions among Anthropologists and Africanists at large regarding the representation of “modern Africa” in western scholarship.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this course are:

- To expose students to anthropological perspective in the representation of Africa and African societies and cultures by examining the wider historical processes that has set the stage for the transformation of the anthropological views on the African societies as object of analysis.
- To help students cultivate a greater command over current trends in social analysis and theorization about modernity, postcolonial subjects, and the changing perspective on African realities.
- To enhance students’ critical thinking and analytical writing skills.

READING MATERIAL

Required Reading

1. James Ferguson (2006). *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Durham: Duke University Press. (Online)
2. James Ferguson (2015). *Give a man a fish: reflection on the new politics of distribution*. Durham: Duke University Press. (Online)
3. Sasha Newell (2012). *The Modernity Bluff: Crime, Consumption, and Citizenship in Côte d’Ivoire*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
4. Charles Piot (2010). *Nostalgia for the Future*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
5. Charles Piot (2019). *The fixer: visa lottery chronicles*. Durham: Duke University Press. (Online)

6. Achille Mbembe (2021). *Out of the dark night: essay on decolonization*. New York: Columbia University Press. (Online)
7. Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, Christopher B. Steiner, , and Euclides Gonçalves (2019). *A companion to the Anthropology of Africa*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (Online)

Only one book need to be purchased at the UF bookstore (*Nostalgia for the future*). All the other books are available online at the UF Library website. Additional reading material will be available on canvas.

REQUIREMENTS

1-Attendance, Readings, and Participation (75 points)

Each student will be expected to participate in class discussion. Students will be evaluated for their familiarity with required readings and their productive contributions to class discussions. Attendance is compulsory. Any absence has to be justified to the satisfaction of the instructor. Any unjustified absence will seriously undermine your final participation grade. An attendance sheet will be distributed at the end of each session and students are required to sign it.

2-Questions on readings: (75 points)

Each student will be expected to write 2 questions that he or she found important about the required readings. The questions have to be uploaded weekly on canvas on Wednesdays by 11:59pm.

3-Précis's on Reading material: (200 points)

Each student is required to write a précis for seven sessions (for graduate students) and four for (undergraduate students). A précis is a relatively brief (300 words) summary of critical thought that arise during your reading. It should include: (1) the primary argument of the text (s); (2) note on the object of analysis and kinds of evidence; (3) the intellectual, disciplinary, and /or political context of the work. These should be sent to me by e-mail at the latest on Wednesday by 4:00pm.

4-Oral Presentation (graduate students)/ Reaction paper (undergraduate students): (100 points)

Graduate students are expected to make an oral presentation on the reading material covered in class or on any subject related to the Anthropology of Modern Africa. The presentation should summarize the reading material as well as evaluate critically the strengths and weaknesses of the author major arguments and findings (in the case of ethnography). The presentation should last 15 minutes. The student is also expected to lead the class discussion around his own questions and those formulated by class-mates for 20 minutes. Students are required to choose their presentation topic and date by the second week of class.

The reaction paper should address critically one of the central topics covered by the reading material. Students should cite at least three references related to the topic. The length of the reaction paper should be 500 words.

5-Final Paper: (150 points)

Each student will be expected to write a research paper of 10 pages for undergrads and 15 pages for grads. The paper should be double-spaced, in 12pt font, with 1” margins on all sides. This paper may review some substantive matter of interest to the student, or directly address a theoretical issue of relevance to African modernity. Please talk to me about your topic and focus by the end of September. This paper will be due on the last day of class. You can send your paper by e-mail or place it in my mailbox in the Anthropology Office by 4 pm on that day. There will be no extensions.

Grading Scale: The following scale will be used for grades on all assignments and exams: 94-100=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 79-82=B-; 76-78=C+; 72-75=C; 69-71=C-; 66-68=D+; 62-65=D; 59-61=D-; 58 and below=E (failing). Regarding university grading policies, be advised that a grade of C- is not valid for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule, or for college basic distribution credit. For questions about minus grades, please see <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. (Links to an external site.).

You may consult current UF policy on how grade point averages are calculated at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>.

Required Policies

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or

medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student.

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

Please note: The Instructor may make minor adjustments to class readings or assignments during the course of the semester. Any and all modifications will be announced ahead of time.

Course Schedule

(I reserve the right to add films and documentaries in the Schedule)

Week 1: Jan 6

Course overview and review of the syllabus

Week 2: Jan 13: History of Anthropology of Africa

Reading: Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, Christopher B. Steiner, , and Euclides Gonçalves (2019). A companion to the Anthropology of Africa. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Part I, chap 1. Part II, chap 10, Part III, chap 12, Part IV, chap 19. (E-Book available at the UF Library)

Week 3: Jan 20: Globalization and African Modernity

Reading: James Ferguson: Global Shadows. Chapter 2, 3 and 4 (Available online at UF Library)

Week 4: Jan 27

Reading: James Ferguson: Global Shadows. Chap 5 to 8

First Precis should be submitted by Jan 27.

Week 5: Feb 3: Prospect of the past and nostalgia of the future

Reading: Charles Piot: Nostalgia of the future. Introduction, chap 1 and 2

Week 6: Feb 10

Reading: Charles Piot: Nostalgia of the Future. Chap 3 to end.

Week 7: Feb 17 (no class because of travel)

Reading: Charles Piot: The fixer: visa lottery chronicles

Week 8: Feb 24: Urban and Youth Cultures

Reading: Newell Sasha: The Modernity Bluff. Chap 1 to 3

Second Precis should be submitted by Feb 24

Week 9: Mar 3: Spring Break

Week 10: Mar 10

Reading: Newell Sasha: The Modernity Bluff. Chap 4 to end

Week 11: Mar 17: Decolonization revisited

Reading: Achille Mbembe (2021). Out of the dark night: essays on decolonization. Chap 1, 2 and 3.

Third Precis should be submitted by Mar 17

Week 12: Mar 24

Reading: Achille Mbembe (2021). Out of the dark night: essays on decolonization. Chap 4 to end.

Week 13: Mar 31: New Politics of Distribution

Reading: James Ferguson (2016). Give a man a fish: reflection on the new politics of distribution. Chap 1 to 3

Week 14: Apr 7

Reading: James Ferguson (2016). Give a man a fish: reflection on the new politics of distribution. Chap 4 to end.

Week 15: Apr 14: Mobile phone culture and social media

Reading:

Pype, Katrien (2016a). Brokers of belonging: elders and intermediaries in Kinshasa's mobile phone culture.

Jennifer Cole: The téléphone malgache: Transnational gossip and social transformation among Malagasy marriage migrants in France. AMERICAN ETHNOLOGIST, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 276–289.

Fourth Precis should be submitted by April 14.

Week 16: Apr 21

Final Paper Submission

General discussion